

ROMANS

THE GRACE OF GOD: A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

Living Sacrifices

• Romans 12 : 1 - 8 •

Week 20

DEVOTION

To what is Paul referring when he begins verse one of Romans 12 with 'therefore?' In the previous eleven chapters of his letter to the Romans, Paul has been talking about God's amazing mercy to a fallen human race through the provision of His Son. We were totally lost, but God provided righteousness through His Son, so that we could have new life. The last verse of Romans 11 encapsulates the first eleven chapters by saying, "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen." It is in view of God's radical mercy, all things being found in him, that Paul says, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers..." and begins to focus on our appropriate response to God's mercy that's outlined in the first eleven chapters.

Paul urges us to commitment to this God who provides a radical righteousness for us, while we are unworthy. Paul basically is saying, "You've heard all I've told you about what God has done for us. It's our obligation to commit our lives to Him." (R. Kent Hughes) Meditate on Christ's gift, take it to heart and it will draw us into a deeper and deeper commitment to Him as we get to know Him more and more. Isaac Watts said in his hymn:

*Love so amazing, so divine
demands my soul, my life, my all.*

What does this commitment look like? Bible commentator, R. Kent Hughes, says that Paul describes the basis, character, demands and effects of such a commitment to Christ, all in the first two verses of Romans 12.

The effects of this commitment spill over into how we view ourselves, and others within the body of Christ, and how we use our God-given gifts to glorify the Father. It makes our commitment sound vitally important, doesn't it?

Monday

Read Romans 12:1; Ephesians 4:1; Romans 6:4

Following the lead of R. Kent Hughes, let's delve in and discover the basis, character, demands and effects of the commitment to Christ that Paul urges us to pursue, in response to His radical mercy.

- 1.What does Paul describe as the basis of our commitment to Christ? (Romans 12:1a)
- 2.What is the character of our commitment to Christ? What does it look like? (Romans 12:1b)
- 3.What makes our commitment a) 'holy' and b) 'pleasing' to God? (the demand of our commitment) (Romans 12:1b, 2a))
- 4.What is the effect of a holy and pleasing commitment to Christ? (Romans 2b)

Tuesday

Read Romans 12:2; Matthew 17:2; Mark 9:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18

The word for 'transformed' (metamorphosed) is used only three other times in the New Testament besides Romans 2:2. In Matthew 17:2 and Mark 9:2 it's used to describe the transfiguration of Christ, when the Lord's glorious inner essence shone through his body so that his face radiated like the sun and his clothing was white with light. This is the transfiguration experience in Christ available to us as Paul explains in 2 Corinthians 3:18. Yes, read that last line again. Beyond amazing!

1. After reading the scriptures for today, in your words, what does it mean to be 'transformed' by the renewing of our mind (to have our inner essence revealed on the outside, revealing Christ within)? How much is our responsibility, and how much is the responsibility of the Holy Spirit?
2. Why is this renewal of our mind so important in our walk with Christ?

Wednesday

Read Romans 12:3-5; Matthew 5:3

Assuming we are committed Christians according to the guidelines of Romans 12:1 and 2, how do we who are having our minds renewed and our lives transfigured think about life as we live it?

1. How are we to think about ourselves? (verse 3b). What (or Who) is the standard or measure Paul gives us on how to think of ourselves?
2. What are some of the natural (worldly) tendencies when we think about ourselves?
3. How do we overcome these natural tendencies?

Thursday

Read Romans 12:4-5, John 17:21 to 23a, John 15:5

Paul moves on to how we think about other believers. We know how important this was to Christ as He prayed for unity amongst believers.

1. How are we to think about other believers?
2. If we think rightly about ourselves, will we think rightly about other believers?
3. How does thinking rightly about ourselves and other believers result in the unity that Christ desired for the church?
4. What does John 15:5 reveal about our similarity to each other within the body of Christ?

Friday

Read Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:27, 28

Paul mentions some of our God-given gifts. Even with our various gifts, the goal is unity within the body while holding on tightly to our diversity.

1. What's the difference between unity and uniformity?
2. What is the beauty of diversity in the body of Christ? What is the danger of uniformity?
3. Are we using the gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit? If not, why not?